

2

RETIREMENT,

A POEM.



RETIREMENT,

A POEM :

B Y

ROMAINE JOSEPH THORN,

AUTHOR OF

CLITO AND DELIA, -- THE MAD GALLOP,
OR TRIP TO DEVIZES, &c. &c.

“ Oh knew he but his happiness, of men
“ The happiest he ! who, far from public rage,
“ Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,
“ Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.”

THOMSON'S AUTUMN.



Bristol :

Printed for OWEN REES, No. 10, Wine-Street.

Sold by T. N. LONGMAN, and J. PARSONS, LONDON ;
S. HAZARD, and W. MEYLER, BATH.

1793.

RETIREMENT

A POEM

BY HENRY JOHN THORNTON

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY J. W. PATERSON, 10, ST. MARK'S LANE.

1847.



TO THE
PUBLIC.

WHEN I first sat down to write the following Poem, I did it solely as an amusement, and entertained not the least idea of communicating it to the world; — that is to say, no further than within the small circle of my particular acquaintance. But having shewn the manuscript, when finished, to one of my very intimate friends, he eagerly advised me to run the hazard of publishing it. After repeated entreaties, I have, at length, consented: But whether it deserves to be thus publicly ushered into the world, or not, I must submit to the superior judgment of others. Thus far I am bold enough to

affirm, that, should the Poetry prove unharmonious in the opinion of any of my readers, the *Sentiments* are not inconsistent with *Virtue*; and if this short Effort of my Muse may be productive of the smallest degree of pleasure to any individual, I shall think myself amply rewarded for the trouble of writing it.

I beg leave to subscribe myself, once more, with the greatest deference,

The Public's most obedient humble servant,

Romaine Joseph Thoreau.

RETIREMENT,

A POEM.

BE gone ! ye noxious pleasures of the town,
Where *Riot*, *Woe*, and *Dissipation*, stalk,
With giant stride : Ye, gladly, I'd forego,
For joys, *unmix'd with guilt* ; for rural groves,
Where *Health* and *Innocence*, triumphant, reign. 5

Hail, to my ravish'd eyes, ye verdant meads ;
Ye moss-clad grottos, and embow'ring woods !
Ye lofty elms ; ye spreading oaks, all hail !
Whose hardy trunks have, years on years, remain'd,
Against the potent fury of the storm 10
(Like BRITAIN'S cliffs) secure. -- Oh ! who would dwell,
Within the limits of the noisy town,
Absorb'd in smoke, and sick with loathsome smells,
Whilst rural life can boast retreats like yours ?
Fain would I hie beneath your spacious boughs, 15

Or reach the gloom of yonder jess'mine bow'r
 (Impervious to the blaze of scorching Sol)
 And there, whilst sportive zephyrs, gently, play,
 Amongst the fragrant, undulating leaves,
 Enjoy the great, the much-instructive page 20
 Of thee, my POPE, — my ADDISON, — my YOUNG!
 Of thee, my lov'd, harmonious THOMSON, too!
 For all is hush'd in sacred silence round,
 Save the faint echo of yon distant bell,
 That slowly vibrates o'er the tranquil lawn. 25

Dear, blest RETIREMENT! who can speak one half
 The boundless blifs with which thou'r't ever fraught?
 Say, does the muck-worm *Miser* know thy worth;
 Who scarcely to himself e'en food affords
 To keep his meagre body from the grave: 30
 Who, all absorb'd in venal thirst for gain,
 Amid the tumult of the giddy world,
 Is, hourly, grasping after fordid gold?
 Does the loose *Debauchee* partake thy sweets;
 Who, in nocturnal scenes of guilt, impure, 35
 Destroys his *soul*, his *fortune*, and his *health*?
 Or, do the *Slaves to Pleasure* know thy joys:
 Who, deep immers'd in one, vain, thoughtless round
 Of pomp and pride, esteem each rapid hour,

Unoccupy'd by gaiety and mirth, 40
An age of woe: Who rack their restless brains
To find some new contrivance to evade
A *moment's serious thought*, -- and murder time? --
20 Do these thy peerless blessings ever feel? --
Ah, no! they're utter strangers to thy charms! 45
For tyrant CONSCIENCE, with despotic sway,
In spite of all they can, secures its grasp,
And (whilst their mispent years, unthought of, fly)
25 With poignant sting, embitters all their joys,

Oh, INDEPENDENCE! could I once but call 50
Thy fertile store of ev'ry good my own,
Forthwith I'd bid the busy world adieu;
And, 'neath the covert of some village cot,
30 Procure a calm retreat! There dwell at ease;
Nor envy *Kings*, nor *Emperors*, their thrones! 55
How great would be my bliss, each Winter's night
(Tho' blust'ring winds blew, hollow, o'er the waste,
And gelid storms, of repercussive hail,
35 Incessant, rattled on my humble roof)
To read the *classic*, or *historic* page, 60
And bring events to view, which, ages past,
The world alarm'd! To dwell, great HOMER, on
Thy sacred song: Thine, matchless VIRGIL, too!

Immortal Bards! Oh! that my raptur'd soul
 Could burst the bounds of its terrestrial clod, 65
 And soar amid the skies: There, find your forms,
 And catch *one portion* of your rage divine!
 How vast my pleasure, mid dread Winter's gloom,
 T'enjoy the social, ever-faithful *friend*,
 A friend, endu'd with sympathetic soul, 70
 Devoid of flatt'ry (foster'd child of Hell!)
 Within whose honest bosom, safely, I
 Could all my sorrows, or my joys, repose!
 One, such as thou, my lov'd RICARDUS,* wert,
 When, o'er the vast Atlantic, I possess'd 75
 Thy warmest wishes for my constant weal;
 E'er *Fortune* lavish'd, on my hapless head,
 Her frowns severe, and clog'd my ling'ring hours
 With varied woe. — Were joys, like these, but mine!
 Then might ye blow, ye surly, wintry, winds, 80
 Until your rage be spent! To *me*, your hum,
 And uproar loud, would more delightful prove
 Than all the charms of grandeur and parade.

Hark! In the windings of yon shady copse,
 What charming concert lives! The joyous birds, 85
 In lofty accents, carol forth their lays,

* A very intimate and beloved friend of the Author's.

RETIREMENT.

and deal a vocal harmony around !
65 their thousand various notes (melodious more
than am'rous strains of midnight serenade,
With which Italian youths their fair-ones greet) 90
urcharge the breeze, and echo o'er the plain.
loud, and more loud, their tuneful airs prevail,
70 and mount into the sky ! Ye happy tribes !
no racking cares afflict your tender breasts,
er, from your eyes, extract the frequent tear : 95
ut, undisturb'd, you rove, from hill to dale,
Till silent Night begins her cheerless reign,
75 and spreads her sable mantle o'er the world ;
Then, to some unfrequented glade retir'd,
far distant from the walk of dreaded man, 100
Or savage *school-boy's* ever hated haunt,
You lull yourselves to rest : When smiling Morn,
80 Array'd in brightness and majestic pomp,
Dispels the dreary gloom, you all again,
In happy strains, resume your wonted song. 105

Nor thou, Oh HALSEWELL ! * shalt escape my lay:
Dear, pleasing spot, enrich'd with ev'ry charm
5 Retirement's warmest votaries can wish,

* A beautiful seat, in the parish of Goathurst, near Bridgwater, in Somersetshire, well known to the Author, belonging to Lady Tynte, relict of the late Sir Charles Kemys Tynte.

Or vast *Imagination's* stretch pourtray !

How oft, with fellow school-boys, have I rov'd 110

Thy mazy wilderness and beauteous lawns:

Explor'd, with rapture, thy lone *hermit* cot,

That lies embosom'd deep amid the grove !

How oft, when tir'd, and faint with Summer's heat,

I've eas'd my thirst at thy relucant stream 115

(To me more sweet than prov'd to fabled Jove

The nectar'd bowl his Ganymede bore !)

Which steals, in wild meanders, o'er thy mead,

From Neptune's image, prostrate on the ground.

But, ah ! thy late lov'd lord no more enjoys 120

Thy num'rous sweets ! *Death*, all subduing *Death* !

(From whose destructive dart not one can 'scape)

With ruthless arm, hath snatch'd him from the world !

Ye poor of *Goathurst* ! oft your suppliant hands

Have felt the bounty of his gen'rous heart ! 125

The ever ready gift he had in store,

Which, lib'rally, he dealt ; and much he joy'd

To send you, fraught with happiness, away !

Come, CONTEMPLATION ! light upon my soul !

And, whilst I wander o'er the flow'ry dale, 130

Or bend my course along the forest's glade,

Oh ! let me not forget to muse on Him,

110 The great, th' eternal Sovereign of the skies;
 Who form'd the azure canopy above,
 And gave creation birth! Who made us man, 135
 In image *nearest to his sacred self!*
 Can I behold this variegated mead;
 115 On boundless sky, that veils imperial Heav'n;
 On flaming *Sun*, who wheels his rapid course
 Along the wide immensity of space; 140
 And, yet, forget the GOD, whose potent word,
 From *Chaos* rude, and infinite opaque,
 120 Confirm'd them what they are? It cannot be!
 Reason condemns absurdity so gross;
 Nor will admit, that man, *distinguish'd* man, 145
 Can be so far embruted, as to fail
 In lasting wonder and unceasing praise.
 125 Deign, mighty GOD, to fill my humble soul
 With *adoration, gratitude, and awe!*
 And help me, henceforth ever to extol 150
 Thy sacred wisdom and thy boundless love. !

130 Hail, blest BRITANNIA! Chosen nation, hail!
 Thrice happy thou, whose highly favor'd sons
 Possess each comfort sacred Peace* can yield!
 Thy meanest peasants, *fearless*, can recline 155

* This Poem was partly written prior to the present war.

Beneath their fig-tree's shade ; their homes enjoy,
 Free from oppreffion and tyrannic rule !
 No frequent broils, or fcenes of blood, disturb
 Thy tranquil land ; but, on thy gladfome plains,
Joy, Wealth, and SACRED LIBERTY reside ! 16
 The neighb'ring nations envy thee thy blifs ;
 And, whilst they dread the thunders of thy arm,
 Confefs thy spot the Paradife of Earth !
 Mild, too, as gentleft zephyrs, are thy fons ;
 Candid and brave ; -- to draw the fword averfe : 16
 But, *once arous'd*, not fiercer terror ftrikes
 The haplefs wretch, who (as he, lonely, roves
 Through Libyan deserts, or Numidian wilds)
 Defcries the fanguine lion, from his den
 Emerging, faft, to feize him for his prey, 17
 Than ftrikes the foe, when once their fury's loofe !
 Infulting SPAIN,* of late, but fcarcely 'fcap'd
 Thy dreadful *Rage* ; which, on her fhores discharg'd,
 Would, foon, her haughty fpirit have fubdu'd,
 And brought her faireft profpects all to nought. 17
 Soon would thy matchlefs fleets have fafely tow'd,
 Within thy joyous ports, her floating towr's ;
 Whilst, humbled in the duft, her captive hoft

* Alluding to the Spanifh armament, relative the difpute of Nootka Sound
 in the year 1790.

Had mourn'd the luckless hour, they first presum'd
To quell thy patience, and awake thy wrath. 180

Abstracted from the world, blest HEALTH secures,
16 RETIREMENT ! mid thy shades, and native groves,
Her constant Reign. No sickly steams exhale
Around thy happy plains: No fetid scents
Of noisome stews thy air, salubrious, taint. 185
Seldom, destructive *Pestilence* is known
16 To sweep thy humble cottagers away,
Or stalk within thy reach: It most delights
To spread its havock in the crowded town,
And city's swarm; where to its direful rage 190
(As hapless *London* can too well declare*)
17 Thousands on thousands oft, lamented, fall.
Thou, too, Oh, heav'n-born INNOCENCE ! abhor'st
The city's guileful joys; and tak'st thy stand
Amid RETIREMENT's walks; where no fell scenes 195
Of lewd intrigue, or foul debauch, employ
17 Nocturnal hours; but, where the peasant, calm
As Summer seas, when not a breath of air
Their surface skims, hies early to his couch,
And rises, cheerfully, at dawn of day. 200
RELIGION, too, fair offspring of the skies,

* Alluding to the ever memorable plague in London.

Is in RETIREMENT found: 'Tis there she keeps
Her happy Court, untainted by the world,
Whose gilded pleasures (fraught with bitter woe!)
Intrude not to molest her sacred sway:
'Tis there, a thoughtful mind, in ev'ry scene,
May meditate at large; there, undisturb'd,
And fearless of the opprobrious sneers of man,
Break forth in raptures on Almighty Love!
There 'tis that best *Philosophy* is gain'd;
Which, in the trying, awful, hour of death
(When Earth, and all its vanities, will prove
No more of moment than a grain of dust)
Will stand our sole support, and safely wing
Our souls, immortal, to the realms of bliss.

